

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9971

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1150

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, AR, AS, RO, OAS

SUBJECT: NEW UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS

1. IT HAS BEEN KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT AMBASSADOR RAUL CARLOS DESMARAS LUZURIAGA, THE PRESENT UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS, WOULD BE REPLACED. SOME WEEKS AGO DESMARAS HIMSELF INFORMED AMBASSADOR HILL THAT HE WOULD BE SENT AS AMBASSADOR TO THE OAS, REPLACING AMBASSADOR QUIJANO. SUBSEQUENTLY, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS AND DESMARAS IS NOW SLATED TO GO AS ARGENTINA'S AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA.

2. THE APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA WOULD BE CONVENIENT FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR HERE RECENTLY TOLD AMBASSADOR HILL THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN URGING THE GOA TO SEND A FIRST RANK DIPLOMAT TO CANBERRA IN ORDER TO UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE ARGENTINA ATTACHES TO ITS RELATIONS WITH ONE OF THE OTHER "SOUTHERN POWERS". TO NAME THE UNDERSECRETARY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS AS AMBASSADOR IN CANBERRA WOULD ANSWER THAT REQUEST. AT THE SAME TIME IT WOULD REMOVE DESMARAS LUZURIAGA FROM THE PRINCIPAL AREA OF ARGENTINE ACTIVITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE. HE WAS APPOINTED UNDERSECRETARY BY FOREIGN MINISTER VIGNES BECAUSE OF HIS FATHER'S CLOSE FRIENDSHIP AND PAST RELATIONSHIP IN

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THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH VIGNES, AND BECAUSE VIGNES WANTED

SOMEONE HE COULD TRUST PERSONALLY AT HIS RIGHT HAND. UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, WHILE LOYAL TO VIGNES, DESMARAS LUZURIAGA HAS NOT PROVED TO HAVE THE INTELLECTUAL BAGGAGE TO GO WITH THE POSITION. HE HAS BEEN SOMETHING OF AN EMBARRASSMENT AND IT HAS BEEN OBVIOUS FOR SOME TIME THAT HE WOULD NOT LAST AS UNDERSECRETARY. IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT HE APPARENTLY WILL NOT BE SENT TO THE OAS, FOR IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HE WOULD HAVE FILLED THAT POST ANY MORE ADEQUATELY THAN HE FILLED THE UNDERSECRETARYSHIP. A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION MAY HAVE TO DO WITH THE GATHERING MOMENTUM TO MAKE AMBASSADOR ALEJANDRO ORFILA, WITH WHOM DESMARAS DOES NOT PARTICULARLY GET ON, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OAS.

3. ACCORDING TO SOURCES IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, DESMARAS LUZURIAGA WILL BE REPLACED BY JUAN CARLOS BELTRAMINO, A CAREER FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER WHO IS PRESENTLY SERVING AS ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR IN BUCHAREST. BELTRAMINO IS DESCRIBED AS A CAREFUL AND EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT. SEVERAL OF THE MINISTRY'S MOST COMPETENT OFFICIALS HAVE EXPRESSED DELIGHT THAT HE IS TO BE NAMED UNDERSECRETARY.
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